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For the President of the European Patent Office

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R C van Dijk



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If no title is shown please refer to the description.
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Optical Amplifier

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Optical Amplifier

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention relates in general to an optical amplifier on the principle of optical parametric amplification, and more particularly to an optical amplifier in which effective optical amplification of the signal light can be obtained over a broad frequency band by phase matching between

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Optical amplifiers of the type in which the amplitude of electric field of light is directly amplified are applicable to the following uses in the optical fiber transmission system:

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As a booster: by increasing the output of a light source of the signal light in an optical transmitter, the transmission distance can be increased. When the optical amplifier is used for the light source of local light in an optical receiver on a coherent optical wave communication system, the reception sensitivity can be improved.

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As a preamplifier: by performing optical amplification in the stage immediately before the photoelectric conversion stage of an optical receiver, the reception sensitivity can be improved.

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As a repeater: by the direct amplification of signal light at some points of the transmission, as compared with the Erbium-Doped Fiber Amplifiers, the decrease of the signal power caused the attenuation of the fiber is regularly compensated .

There has been known an optical amplifier in which optical parametric amplification of signal light is achieved by nonlinear effect of second or third order obtained when signal light and pump light are propagated through an optical waveguide structure made of a nonlinear optical material.

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However, such conventional optical amplifiers have had a disadvantage that phase matching between the signal light and the pump light is not always easily achieved therein and, hence, effective optical amplification of the signal light is obtained only within a narrow frequency band.

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From the US 5,274,495 an optical amplifier is disclosed which, is adapted such that signal light and pump light are propagated through an optical waveguide structure therein made of an optically nonlinear material to thereby achieve optical parametric amplification of the signal light, is provided with means for attenuating idler light to be generated within the optical waveguide structure by adding special dopants to the fiber or by setting the cutoff frequency of the optical waveguide structure superior to the frequency of the idler light.

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This allows an attenuation of the idler wave but cannot avoid a repowering of the pump wave during the parametric process.

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Optical parametric amplification is carried out by a power transfer from a pump wavelength towards a signal wavelength. This energy exchange depends on phase matching between the waves of the two wavelengths and the idler wave, on their power and on fiber nonlinear coefficient. For 'small-signal' e.g. signal with a small power, signal power increases linearly with fiber length. When the signal power increases up to the level of the pump power, then the energy exchange between the wave is reversed. In result the signal wave recharges power back to the pump wave. Then the signal power decreases with length, which makes amplification inefficient.

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In order to avoid signal power traveling back to the pump, fibers length in known optical parametric amplifiers is shorter than the length from which signal power decreases. Pump power remains non-depleted during amplification. The efficiency of parametric amplification strongly depends on the frequency shift between signal and pump waves (through phase matching). Consequently signals with different wavelengths do not experience the same gain and for a given fiber length, some wavelengths are more amplified than the others. Finally the gain spectrum is not flat.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide an optical amplifier in which the repowering of the pump wave is avoided and, hence, effective optical amplification of the signal light can be obtained over a
5 broad frequency band by an effective suppression of the idler wave.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 Viewed from an aspect, the present invention provides an optical amplifier adapted such that signal light and pump light are propagated through an optical waveguide structure therein having a core with a relatively high refractive index and a clad with a relatively low refractive index, at least the
15 core exhibiting a nonlinear response of second order, to thereby achieve optical parametric amplification of the signal light comprising separate idler light filter means for attenuating idler light, which is generated in the process of optical parametric amplification, within the optical waveguide structure.

20 Viewed from another aspect, the present invention provides an optical amplifier adapted such that signal light and pump light are propagated through an optical waveguide structure therein having a core with a relatively high refractive index and a clad with a relatively low refractive index, at least the core exhibiting a nonlinear response of third order, to
25 thereby achieve four-wave mixing optical amplification of the signal light, comprising separate idler light filter means for attenuating idler light, which is generated in the process of parametric optical amplification, within the optical waveguide structure.

30 According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the optical waveguide structure is cut off by a separate idler wave filter mean absorbing the idler light.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

35 FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an optical amplifier showing a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a conceptual diagram of optical parametric amplification;

FIG.3 is another conceptual diagram of parametric amplification

5 FIG. 4: diagram of signal gain versus length with and without filter

FIG. 5 diagram of the signal gain versus the signal wavelength with and without filter

10 FIG 6: Comparison of solution with continuous absorption and filter absorption of idler wave.

Fig. 1 shows an example of a realization of an optical amplifier using the invention. It is mainly composed of a pump device 1 and a piece of amplifying fiber 2 which length is L . A signal 3 is tapped via a coupler 4 to the amplifying fiber to be amplified. A filter 5 cuts off the piece of amplifying fiber. The optical filter 5 is placed at the distance L_{\max} in the piece of amplifying fiber.

20 Fig. 2 represents the frequency of the waves in the amplifying fiber 2. Pump's frequency is ν_p , signal frequency ν_s and an idler is created with the frequency $\nu_i = 2 \cdot \nu_p - \nu_s$. If an optical filter centered on ν_i is placed at the distance L_{\max} , the signal will keep its power after L_{\max} .

25 For a nonlinear response of third order, parametric amplification is based on Four-Wave Mixing: two pump photons create one signal photon and one idler photon. So parametric process amplifies the signal and creates a new wave the idler. The propagation of the signal and the idler are linked. Their power increases in the same way and when they are comparable to the pump's one, the signal and the idler give back their power to the pump. These power exchanges result from phase matching. Consequently if phase matching is broken, the power exchanges stop. Suppressing one of the three interacting waves can break phase matching. If the idler wave is filtered at the length where amplification is maximum, then signal will keep its power and the power transfer towards the pump will be avoided.

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35 When the pump is non-depleted, i.e. for small-signal, signal gain is again proportional to fiber length.

$$G(dB) = \frac{10}{\ln(10)} 2 g P_{po}(W) L_{eff} - 6$$

where .

- 5 G is the gain of the signal
 P_{po} is pump power, (W) in energy units
 $g^2 = (\gamma P_{po}(W))^2 - (\kappa/2)^2$ is the gain coefficient
 γ is fiber's nonlinear coefficient
 κ is the phase matching term

10

The relation reaches maximum gain for the length L_{max} defined:

$$L_{max} = \frac{1 - e^{(-\alpha(km^{-1}) L_{eff\ max})}}{\alpha(km^{-1})}$$

where .

- 15 α is fiber's attenuation

$$L_{eff\ max} = \frac{P_{po}(dB) - P_{so}(dB) + 3}{\frac{10}{\ln(10)} 2 g - \alpha(dB/km)}$$

- 20 In a preferred embodiment a standard DSF (Dispersion Shifted Fiber) represents the amplifying fiber length. The nonlinear coefficient of this DSF is $2\ W^{-1}.km^{-1}$, its zero-dispersion wavelength 1529.2 nm, its dispersion slope $0.07\ ps.nm^{-2}.km^{-1}$ and its attenuation is 0.25dB/km. Pump wavelength is 1530 nm with a pump power of 30 dBm. The signal wavelength is 1541 nm. L_{max} is calculated with the previous relations to a value of
- 25 $L_{max} = 2.025\ km$. Therefore the filter is placed at the distance around 2.1 km. Fig. 2 shows the evolution of the signal gain along the fiber with and without the filter.

- 30 Since the efficiency of parametric process is maximum for wavelength of total phase matching, this wavelength reaches maximum gain for a shorter length L_{max} than the other wavelengths. Thanks to a filter centered on the idlers of wavelengths of high parametric efficiency, the fiber length of the amplifier could be longer so that wavelengths of low parametric efficiency

could achieve maximum gain as well and wavelengths of high parametric efficiency could keep their power.

Fig. 3 shows two possibilities to amplify a signal in the C-Band region. Amplification is possible whether $v_s < v_p$ or $v_s > v_p$, in the first case, $v_i > v_p$ and in the second, $v_i < v_p$.

For example, if the C band wavelength region is to be amplified, 2 fibers might be chosen: a fiber with its zero dispersion around 1530nm or a fiber with a zero dispersion around 1570 nm.

10

Fig. 5 shows the calculation of an example, with a highly nonlinear fiber (zero-dispersion wavelength 1529.2nm, dispersion slope 0.03ps/nm²/km and nonlinear coefficient 10W⁻¹.km⁻¹) and a pump ($\lambda_p = 1530$ nm, $P_p = 1$ W), parametric gain has been calculated for several single signals ($P_s = 0$ dBm) with and without a filter. The filter suppresses the idler waves of signal wavelengths superior to 1546nm, it is placed at 450m from the input. The total length is 700m. Without the filter, the widest gain band is reached for a length $L=500$ m.

With the filter, a single-channel signal with wavelength inferior to 1546nm could be more amplified: at 1543nm, an improvement of 4.8dB has been calculated. And for wavelengths which idler waves that are filtered, no drawbacks have been noticed.

Also in the use of WDM transmission this amplifier has been simulated (8 signals with $P_{tot}=0$ dBm) with good results.

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Fig. 6 presents a simulation with the same parameters as described above but the attenuation of the idler wave was twice the attenuation of the pump or the signal. $\alpha(\text{idler})=0.5$ dB/km, $\alpha(\text{pump})=\alpha(\text{signal})=0.25$ dB/km.

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Attenuating the idler wave all along the fiber as in prior art does not enable to avoid the power going back to the pump when the signal power is high. The attenuation of the idler reduces the loss of gain but not sufficiently. With a filter, we can see that gain decreases of only 1.2dB.

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- The filter used to suppress the idler is a rejecting filter centered on the idler frequency $\nu_i = 2 \nu_p - \nu_s$.

The filter for suppressing or attenuating the idler wave can be any filter that is suitable and known by persons skilled in the art.

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As an example a Mach-Zehnder structured filter is one possible solution, also a doped glass filter, a Fabry-Perot filter.

10 The filter should at least reduce the local power of idler wave in the range of 50 % .

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10 CLAIMS

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1. An optical amplifier comprising:
an optical waveguide structure (2) through which signal light (3) and pump
20 light (1) are propagated, said optical waveguide structure (2) having a core
with a relatively high refractive index and a clad with a relatively low
refractive index, at least said core exhibiting a nonlinear response of second
or third order, to thereby achieve optical parametric amplification of said
signal light; and
25 separate idler light filter means (5) for attenuating idler light, which is
generated in the process of optical parametric amplification, said idler light
filter means being placed in said optical waveguide structure at a defined
length L_{\max} .

30 2. Optical amplifier according to claim 1 where the length L_{\max} is defined by
the ratio between power of the pump wave and the signal wave, the gain
coefficient of the waveguide, the absorption of the waveguide.

35

3. Optical amplifier according to claim 1 where the length L_{\max} is

$$5 \quad L_{\text{eff max}} = \frac{P_{\text{po}}(\text{dBm}) - P_{\text{so}}(\text{dBm}) + 3}{\frac{10}{\ln(10)} 2g - \alpha(\text{dB/km})}$$

P_{po} is pump power, (dBm) in logarithmic units

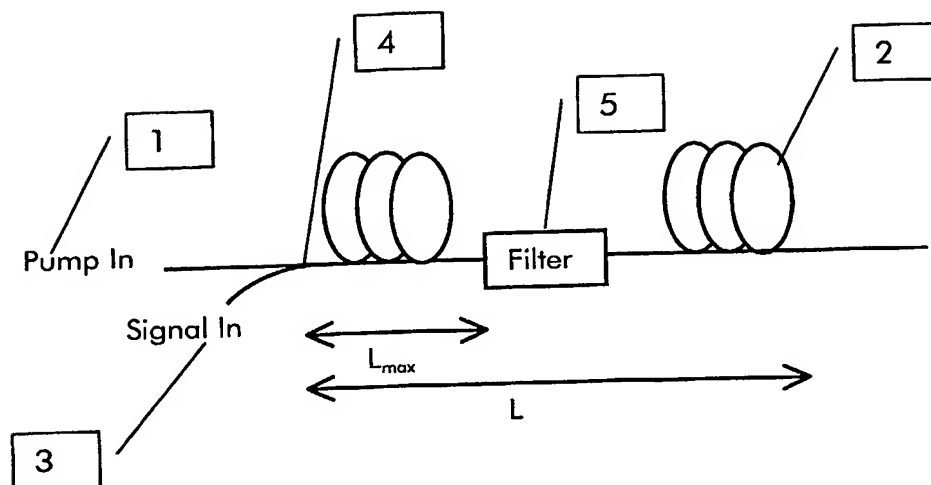
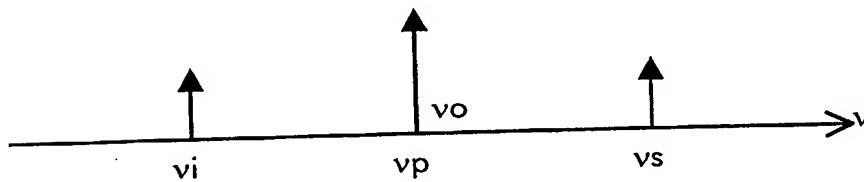
$g^2 = (\gamma P_{\text{po}}(\text{W}))^2 - (\kappa/2)^2$ is the gain coefficient

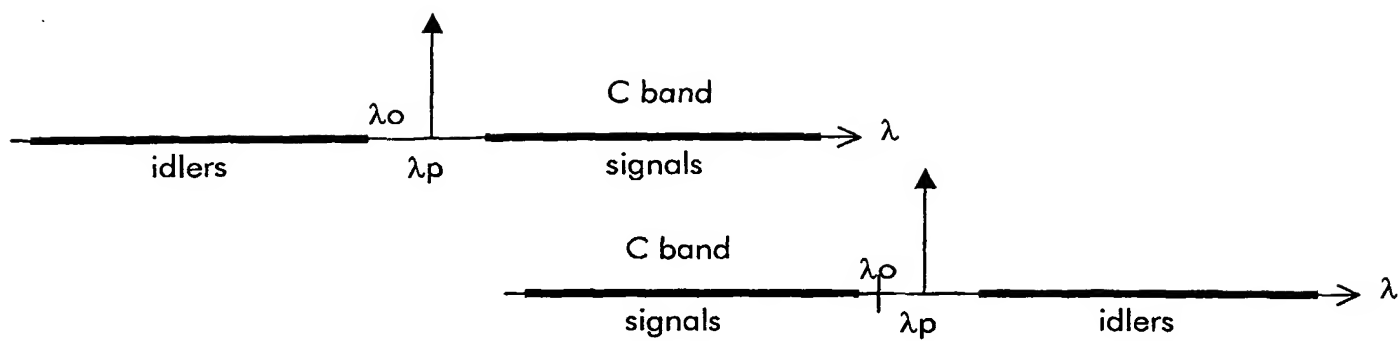
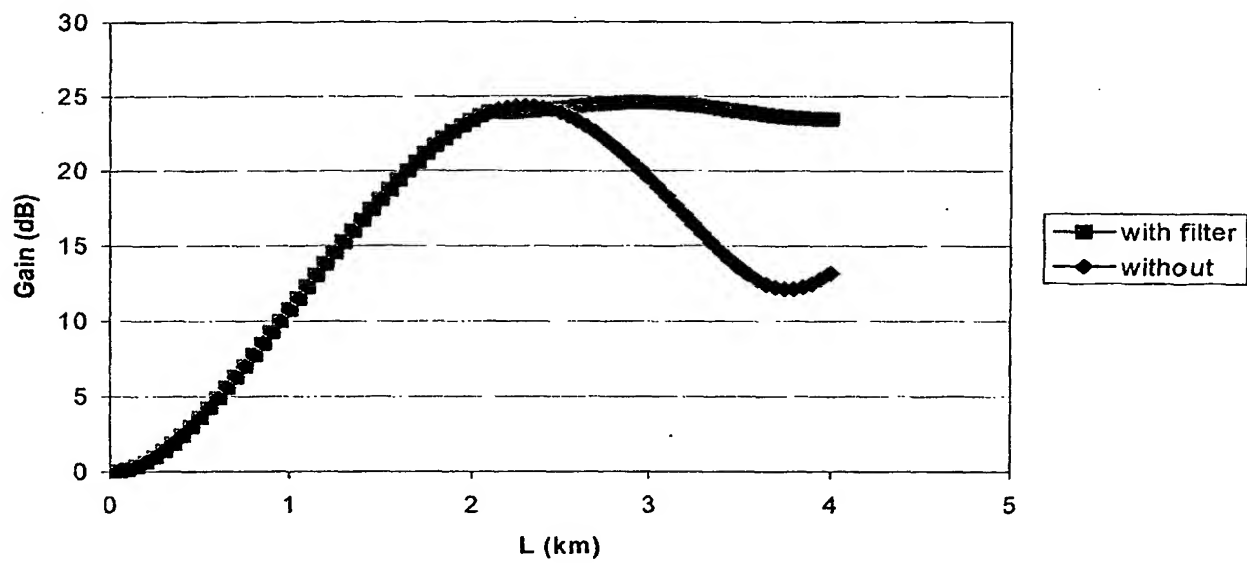
γ is waveguide nonlinear coefficient

10 κ is the phase matching term

α is waveguide attenuation

15 4. Optical amplifier according to claim 1 where the filter reduced at least 50% of the power of idler wave.

**FIG. 1****FIG. 2**

**Fig. 3****FIG. 4**

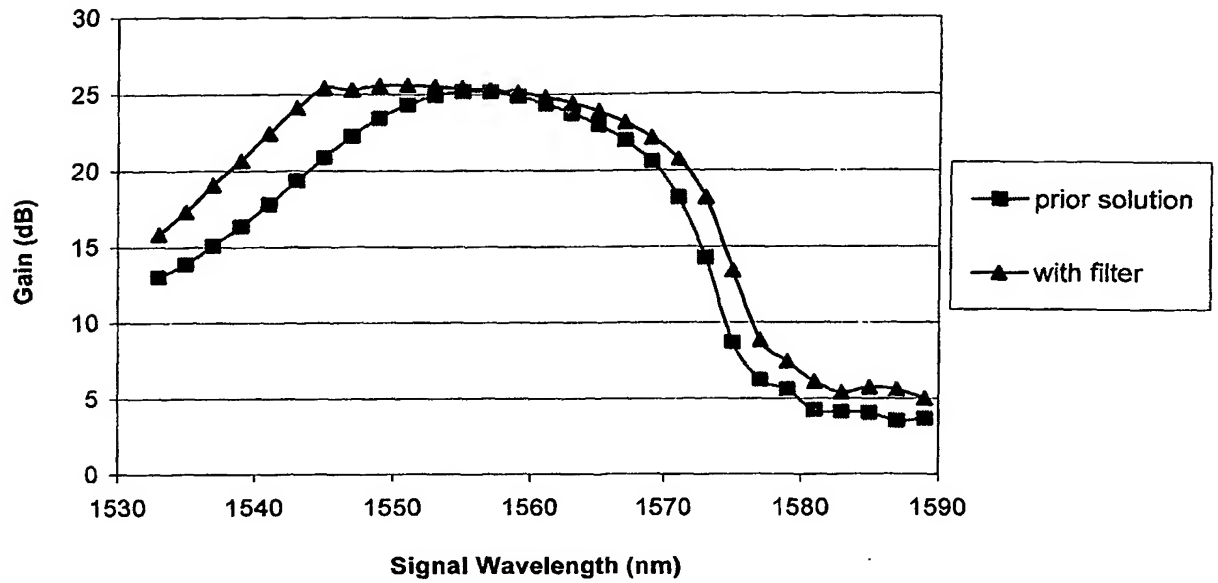


FIG. 5

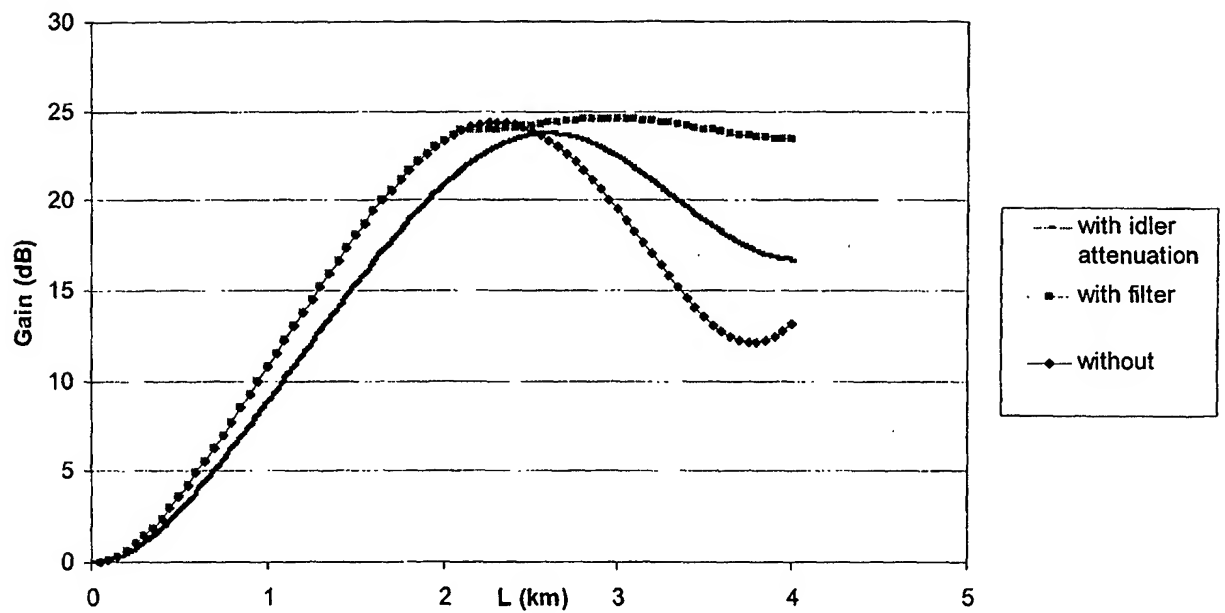


FIG. 6

